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"So rief der Lenz in den Wald."  
DIE MEISTERSINGER, act i.

## The Meister.

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VOL. III.

FEBRUARY 13, 1890.

No. 9.

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### The Eighties.



THE decade just completed, while inflicting upon us an irreparable loss in the death of Richard Wagner, has marked an extraordinary development in the bearing of the greater musical world towards his works. At its commencement, *Parsifal* was still amid the limbo of unperformed dramas, and though 1880 had been originally fixed for its production, yet the funds of the *Patronat-Verein* did not permit until late in that year itself the making of definite arrangements for its performance two years later, namely, in 1882. The Bayreuth *Festspielhaus*, the foundation-stone of which was laid in 1872, had, after its opening for the great

festival of 1876, remained a closed book, for lack of sufficient money to again represent the Trilogy, whose separate parts Wagner had reluctantly allowed to pass as isolated skirmishers across the stages of the larger German theatres, soon to be followed by the Bayreuth scenery itself, which, exiled from its home, took up its years of wandering through the world.

A Society had been formed in 1878, which at the end of 1879 numbered some 1,700 members. This sought to stir the apathetic heart of Europe to a true appreciation of the prize she had so lately won. Yet its main work, the presentment of Wagner's dramas in pure rendering before the world, seemed almost as far off as ever. Excepting a few of those who had learnt in 1876 to reverence the intentions of the Meister, the artist who took up Wagnerian *rôles*, still sang them in the old conventional style of hybrid French-Italian opera. His prose works were almost a dead letter to all but literary know-all, while England knew nothing of the grandest musician of the century but his first four operas; for the exertions of Edward Dannreuther at the St. James's and Albert Halls, and the advent of Richard Wagner himself in 1877, had only just begun to sow the seed of enquiry into his later works; and the English at the *Festspiel* of 1876 were conspicuous by their rarity.

Contrast with this close of the "Seventies" the close of the "Eighties."

The whole cycle of the *Ring* is now frequently presented in the principal cities of Germany, and there is scarcely now a single Wagnerian singer whose heart is not in his work. The *Festspielhaus* has been re-opened, and externally improved; from 1882 to 1889, only two years, 1885 and 1887, have been marked by silence within its walls. *Parsifal* has been produced, and has opened the eyes of the world to an altogether new departure in art, and one which has, with its overpowering brilliance, lit up the earlier, if no less magnificent, efforts of its author. The representations, far from being exiguously attended, as in 1876, have each year attracted larger audiences, until, in that which has but now elapsed,

of those who had come from the uttermost parts of the earth many were sent away dissatisfied for lack of space. *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger* have been presented to the world in ideal form at Bayreuth, and have added to the store of examples, bequeathed by Wagner, of what artistic depth and thought-out earnestness can do to cultivate the public taste. Yet further, *Parsifal* has been preserved unspotted from the world; for hitherto it has been, and we hope will henceforth be, kept inviolate from the greedy grasp of those who would turn its virgin mysteries into the common coin of theatrical speculation.

The Society has leapt into fresh life, with its new organisation. At present, 8,000 are its members, and 300 its branches; while in England, the Cinderella of musical nations, we can now muster 300 on our rolls.

The prose-writings of Wagner are daily becoming more widely known, and at last are meeting, in Germany at least, with their proper recognition, as containing some of the deepest thoughts ever conceived by philosophy; while even at home the tiny atom that we have been able to quarry from the mountain has called the attention of earnest students to the great mine that lies behind.

In England again, we have heard all the later works of Wagner, including an oratorio-version (which had better have stayed away) of *Parsifal*. Hans Richter has given us *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger*, at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and Angelo Neumann the whole *Ring* at Her Majesty's, the Italian Opera following suit in 1889 with *Die Meistersinger* in that tongue; while a symphonic concert without some later Wagner extract is predoomed to failure. In America for five years past the German Opera has established itself, with Wagner as its trump-card; and at Bayreuth, the English and Americans form an almost preponderating portion of the audience.

Such is the record of the "Eighties," from the subjective point of view. From the objective, we have only to add that the English newspapers, after treating Wagner for years as the *enfant terrible*

of the musical family, have at last begun to grudgingly concede his genius, and have turned in wrath to rend his nurses, those suppositiously "long-haired" ones who have sworn by him until their convictions have become contagious.

Verily the "Eighties" have wrought wonders and, *pace* Mr. Rowbotham, the "Wagner Bubble" has assumed most prodigious and crystalline proportions !



## A Study of "Die Meistersinger."

### PART I.



**N**RICHARD WAGNER'S *Leben und Wirken*, C. F. Glasenapp says:—"What element was there in the life of the artist that could find its expression in the deep, inward cheerfulness that is the chief characteristic of his 'Hans Sachs,' even in the wonderful earnestness of the commencement of the third act of this drama? Had not his life been passed in continual unrest, in the cares and deprivations of exile?—Genius alone is able to create for itself a life within life, and in homelessness itself to build up with strong hands an inner home. The outer existence of the Meister stood to the inner spirit which lifted him to the conception of his great work in as strong a contrast as that which marks the extraordinary circumstance that the poem of the 'Meistersinger'—*German* from its very inmost soul to its minutest outward detail—was actually written in Paris!"

In the above quotation we can see the whole origin of this remarkable creation. Wearied with the constant cares and trials of daily life, disgusted with the hollowness and glitter of the only aspect in which the French capital had presented itself to him, Wagner must needs seek in his own imagination for the cheerfulness denied

to him by the illusory world outside, and in the earnest characteristics of his own nation for the solid ground on which to lay the foundations of his dream-castle. The poem itself tells the history of its birth, in the lines given to Hans Sachs : "All poet's art and poetry are naught but inspiration sent us in true dreams," and again "Meisters in utmost want were they, spirits besieged by toilsome life : amid the thorns of need they painted for themselves a picture; that so the love of youth might live in memory clear and lasting, and evermore the face of spring might laugh from out the mirror." Thus it was that out of bitter experience was born the smiling child of fancy, and that, in the oppressive atmosphere of Paris, the poet turned in yearning to the times when his own fatherland was most itself, the period of Nuremberg's bright and many-coloured life.

There are many theories as to the intention of *Die Meistersinger*, some explaining it by the personal method, and finding in "Walther" the composer himself, in "Hans Sachs" his faithful friend and champion Liszt, and in "Beckmesser" this or that rival composer or hostile critic (among these one name in particular has been suggested, that of a musician of some amount of standing and erudition, who dabbled also in criticism); whilst others elected to find in the work a violent attack upon all traditions of musical form and style. But the true purpose of the poem is shown by the words in which its author refers to his earliest conception of the plan—"I took Hans Sachs as the last manifestation of the art-productive spirit of the People,"—and thus shows us the true spirit of freedom and humanity which is the characteristic of the drama.

It has often been raised as an objection to this work that in it Wagner departed from his rule of seeking for his plots in the myths of primitive nations. It is true that there alone would he find the material for such colossal works as the "Ring des Nibelungen" or the "Tristan-und-Isolde"; but as the Athenians, by the comic epilogue, relieved the intensity of emotion aroused by their great tragedies, so has the poet-composer offered us in the

*Meistersinger*, a bridge over which we may pass from his world of gods and demi-gods to the busy concerns of our own daily life. He seems to teach us in this poem the lesson that heroism and devotion, manliness and pure love, are not to be found alone in regions far removed from our daily life, but can be brought down even into the lowly shoemaker's workshop. And, in his customary rejection of modern subjects, it was only the petty intrigue that he warred against; what traces of *that* are to be found in this poem, except as offered up to ridicule? The whole work is conceived in the noblest strain, and with the breath of its life, the individualisation of its characters, and the constant flow of its *naïf* humour, it is fitted to rank its author as the German Shakespeare.

With all its realism of mediæval German life, the poem of *Die Meistersinger* is stamped throughout with Ideality. The one great strand that runs throughout the drama is devotion to the Ideal; this is the chief characteristic of Eva, Walther, and Hans Sachs.

The pedantry of the Meisters is but the necessary foil wherewith to set in brighter light the ideal aim of Walther. This aim is embodied in Eva, the ever young and living spirit of true art, the daughter of the golden age (the goldsmith, Pogner) who chooses from out the circle of her worshippers, him only whose soul is fettered by no restraining rules, and who has sought in the sounds of nature for the inspiration of his song. Hans Sachs, as the embodiment of the "spirit of the people," completes the roundness of the picture by his instantaneous recognition both of art and artist, and forms the *receptive* ideal, without which the *productive* cannot find fulfilment. It is thus that even amid the surroundings of a work-a-day world, the great mystery of the two ruling principles of the universe, action and passion, giving forth and taking in, will and manifestation, is brought to light, while the spirit that unites the two, typified in Eva, who crowns both Walther and Hans Sachs, completes the trinity of art, artist, and art-lover.

As in our article on *Parsifal* (see Nos. II.—IV.), we do not

propose to deal with the music of *Die Meistersinger*, except incidentally, for it is quite impossible to translate into articulate phrases the beauties of this most marvellous specimen of contrapuntal composition, and we must, therefore, refer our readers to the elaborate analysis of the score by A. Heintz entitled, "*Versuch einer Musikalischen Erklärung*" (published by Otto Lessmann, Charlottenburg, Berlin). Suffice it to say that Wagner himself has never surpassed, if he has equalled, the richness of musical invention and development exhibited in this work.

Before dealing with the details of the *Meistersinger*, we think it advisable to give a short sketch of the plot, in the words in which Wagner describes it in his "*Mittheilung an Meine Freunde*," written in the year 1851:—"I took Hans Sachs as the last manifestation of the art-productive spirit of the people, and placed him, in this sense, in contrast to the buckram, burgher-spirit of the Meistersingers, to whose fantastic pedantry of hard and fast poetic rule I gave personal embodiment in the character of the Marker. This Marker was the judge set up by the Singer-Guild, whose duty it was to spy out (*merken*) the mistakes in prosody, &c., of the performers, especially of fresh candidates, and to mark them down by crosses; he who had merited a certain number of crosses, had *versungen* (failed by his false singing). In my drama the oldest member of the Guild offered the hand of his young daughter to that Meister who should win the prize in a forthcoming public tournament of song. The Marker finds a rival in his suit, in the person of a young cavalier who, inspired by the lore of the ancient Minnesingers and the deeds of fabled heroes, leaves his impoverished and ruined ancestral castle, to learn in Nuremberg the mysteries of the Guild of Meistersingers." (In the drama this motive is not the primary object of Walther's visit; but he comes to Nuremberg to sell his estates, and, inspired with love for Eva, the daughter of his host, Pogner, he ascertains the conditions of the prize in his encounter with her and Magdalene in the church.) "He enters his name as a candidate for acceptance by the Guild, impelled thereto by a sudden passion of love for the

maiden-prize, 'whom only a Master of the Guild may win.' Set to the test, he sings an enthusiastic song in praise of woman, which, however, excites the irrepressible displeasure of the Marker, who declares that he has failed, when the candidate has but half finished his song. Sachs, pleased by the young man's bearing, frustrates, in his best interest, his despairing attempt to elope with the maiden ; and, at the same time, finds an opportunity to vex the Marker. The latter, who has made a violent attack upon Sachs on account of an unfulfilled order for a pair of shoes, with the intention of humiliating him, takes up his position at night before the window of the maiden, so as to serenade her with the song by means of which he hopes to win her as prize ; for he wishes to gain her approbation beforehand and thus secure her decision for the contest. As soon as the Marker commences, Sachs, whose workshop is opposite to the serenaded house, begins to sing in a loud voice, and replies to the protestations of the former that 'it is necessary for him to sing in order to keep himself awake at such late work' ; while no one knows better than the Marker that the work is pressing, since he has taxed Hans so severely for the unfinished shoes. At last Sachs promises the unhappy wretch that he will desist, on the condition that he may mark, by hammer-strokes, on the shoes upon the last, according to his shoemaker fashion, the faults which he may detect in the Marker's song. The Marker now sings, and Sachs strikes often and repeatedly upon the last. The Marker rushes on him in wrath, and Sachs calmly asks him whether he has finished his song. 'Not nearly,' cries the Marker ; while Sachs, laughing, holds up the shoes and declares that they are now completed by 'Marker-crosses.' The Marker makes a miserable figure of himself, as, in despair, he bawls out, without pause, the rest of his song to the woman at the window, who shakes her head energetically." This woman is Magdalene, Pogner's house-keeper, who takes Eva's place at the window, while Eva is seated on the garden bench with Walther, waiting for an opportunity to steal away unnoticed. The lovers are, however, constantly frustrated in their attempts ; first, by the night-watchman, then by

Sachs, who turns his light right across their path, next by the Marker, and, finally, by the street-riot which is occasioned by this turmoil, and in which Beckmesser is soundly drubbed by David, Sachs' apprentice, who is in love with Magdalene. At last the watchman's horn sounds again, and the crowd disperses, while Sachs drags David and Walther into the house, and Pogner carries Eva home, under the impression that she is Magdalene, whose head-covering she wears. In the Third Act Sachs is discovered, soliloquising on the "vanity" of the world; David sings his "verses," and is later raised to the rank of Journeyman by Sachs; Walther composes his prize-song, under the guidance of Sachs, who writes at his dictation; Beckmesser enters and filches the poem; and Eva, under the pretence of pain from her new shoes, visits the shoemaker to discover the fate of Walther; the latter comes once more into the workshop, in festal attire, Magdalene and David also appear, and the prize-song is "baptised" in the celebrated Quintett. To take up the narration of these and the following incidents, in the words of Wagner, "The next day Beckmesser, in despair, obtains from Sachs a poem composed by the young knight; but the latter warns him to be careful in the selection of the 'tune' to which he shall sing it. The conceited Marker is perfectly confident in his own powers in this matter, and sings the poem before the assemblage of Meisters and people, to an air so completely unsuitable and disfiguring" (the air of his own serenade distorted to fit the metre of Walther's poem, which poem itself he has caricatured in his hasty and imperfect committal of it to memory), "that again he fails, and this time decisively. Beside himself with rage, he accuses Sachs of trickery in foisting upon him a ridiculous poem; but the latter explains that the poem is good enough, only it must be sung to a becoming tune. It is then decided that whoever knows the right tune shall be the victor. The young knight fulfils the stipulation, and wins the bride; but he rejects contemptuously the admission to the Guild which is proffered him. Sachs takes up the defence of the Meistersinger-craft, and closes with the words: 'Though to ruins fall the Holy Roman Empire, yet have we still the Holy German Art.'" The final

scene is thus depicted in the libretto :—" All join enthusiastically in the song—Eva takes the wreath from Walther's brow and presses it upon Sachs ; Sachs takes the chain of the Guild from Pogner and hangs it round Walther's neck—Walther and Eva lean, on either side, on Sachs' shoulders ; Pogner sinks on one knee before Sachs, as though in homage. The Meistersingers point with raised hands to Sachs as their chief. While the 'Prentices clap their hands and dance, the people, roused to enthusiasm, wave their hats and kerchiefs and cry : 'Sachs ! Hans Sachs ! Hail Nuremberg's beloved Sachs !'"

This, in brief, is the plot of the play, a plot almost as simple in its construction as *Tristan* itself, and with all its humour and its constantly varying play of comic situation, filled full of tender human emotion. Its central figure is Hans Sachs, a character so noble, so loving, and so true that we cannot but recognise in it the grandest delineation of modern poetry. The spirit of unassuming self-sacrifice, of ungrudging help of others, of friendly counsel and of frank good nature, flows from Hans Sachs in one constant, refreshing stream. To turn from the everlasting self-seeking of modern society to the fresh, manly character of this mediæval shoemaker is like leaving the poisoned air of a hot-house for the quickening breezes of the autumn sea. In his very bantering of Beckmesser there is none of the sting of sarcasm, but good-humoured reproof or honest indignation lies in each sally of his wit. When Beckmesser spitefully suggests that "Perhaps a widower" would fain enter the lists as candidate for Eva's hand, Sachs' reply is, "Not so, Herr Marker, of younger sap than thine or mine must the bridegroom be," for he loves Eva too much to see her wedded to a man too old for her. When Beckmesser complains of Sachs' delay in fulfilling his order for the pair of shoes, thus bringing in the "shop" into the art-school, Sachs has a ready reproof for such an unworthy line of argument ; he tells him that "with all his humble poetry" he had not yet found a couplet worthy of the learned notary, so that he might treat him "at least as well as the donkey-driver, for even the shoes of the latter he would not send home without a couplet inscribed thereon ;" and it is with the greatest

finesse that he makes this assumed poverty of invention a reason for his hearing the close of Walther's song, "so that he might gather from it a fitting inscription for the Marker's shoes." The whole of Sachs' intercourse with Beckmesser is marked by this outwardly rough repartee, so telling from the masterly way in which it exposes all the littleness of the Marker's character. The scene between these two men in the Second Act is full of humorous covert allusions by Hans Sachs to the gross manner in which Beckmesser had allowed his rivalry to influence his treatment of Walther in the *Probelied*. As Beckmesser had endeavoured to pre-judge Walther's skill, even before the latter's test-song, so Sachs replies to the Marker's tirade by asking, "Is *that* your song?"—in assumed good faith; and recalls the Marker's interruption of the song of the young knight in the selfsame words, "Have you finished yet?"—replying to Beckmesser's involuntary repetition of Walther's words, "How so?"—by a parody of the Marker's reply, "For I have already got through with my *shoes*." The whole scene is marked by the same good-humoured ridicule on the part of Hans Sachs, who desires to exhibit to the listening pair of lovers the amusing spectacle of the discomfiture of pedantry, in recompense to Walther for the shame to which the Marker had exposed him in the singing-school.

In the same spirit is conceived the delightful dialogue between Sachs and Beckmesser in the Third Act, when the latter has furtively appropriated Walther's poem. The assumption of humility on the part of Hans Sachs when Beckmesser produces the sheet of paper is delicious, as the cobbler deprecatingly asks "Was it *that*?"—as though he should say, "Is that poor verse worthy of your favour?"—and he takes up Beckmesser's proof of the recent composition of the poem, by adding "Yes, and the ink is yet wet." He cannot refrain, however, from another sly dig at the Marker, as he says, "You shall have the verse as a present, so that you may not be deemed a pilferer," and again tells him that he may sing the poem, "if it be not too difficult." But with all his good humour he cannot repress his disgust, as soon as Beckmesser has left him: "so utterly perverse ne'er found I any man till now."

We find the same bantering mood running through Sachs' dialogues with Eva and with Walther, only here the humour is lighter and more affectionate. The way in which he affects to be ignorant of the purpose of Eva's visits to him in the Second and Third Acts is inimitable. On each occasion he endeavours to treat her as though she had only come to see him about her new shoes, and persists in teasing her about the same until she is forced to disclose her real object. All this is done in the most affectionate manner, and the badinage is that of a father with a spoilt child. When she wishes to discover the fate of Walther in the Meisterschool, he twits her instead with the suit of Beckmesser; "a Marker with proud wooer's tread is sure of victory to-morrow: Herr Beckmesser's shoes I must complete." At last, when her patience is well-nigh exhausted, he artfully opens a way for her by confessing that he has had good cause for vexation that day, and thus leads her on to the question she has long bashfully repressed. Thus, too, in the Third Act, he insists on keeping her to her complaints about the misfit of the shoes, pretending to ignore any ulterior object in her visit until, when Walther appears, Sachs takes the maid at her word and removes her shoe, thus leaving her in the embarrassing situation of being constrained to remain standing in an unsteady posture, when she would fain run forward to greet her lover. And then he teases her the while by saying, "I have thought out a plan to end my toil; the best thing I can do is for myself to woo thee, and win the poet's prize." In his interview with Walther, too, he will not let the young man off without a good-humoured reference to the attempted elopement: "Your song, in truth, did vex the Meisters; and that with cause, for with such fire of verse and love one leads folk's daughters to wild adventure;" and, again, reminds him of the "beat" which marked the metre of the Marker's serenade: his own hammering on the rival's shoes. Nor can he resist the temptation to poke fun at the Meisters, when he tells Walther that the melody of his song is not easy to catch, and "that vexes our good old friends." These quotations, however, give a very feeble idea of the fund of *bonhomie* and quiet humour run-

ning through almost every line given to Hans Sachs ; for it consists more in the general bearing of the dialogue than in the individual phrases ; and, besides this, it is so immensely heightened in effect by the quaint turns of the musical setting, that what one has experienced in the representation is partially lost on reviewing the libretto in cold blood ; for Wagner's work is essentially meant to be acted rather than read. It is amusing, however, to note the caricature of criticism which one of our leading daily papers lately indulged in, calling Sachs "almost as great a bore as Wotan." Hans Sachs a bore ; or the critic a dullard ? We leave it to our readers to decide ; but a reference to the delightful mock ill-humour of the shoemaker in the Third Act, when he parodies both Eva and Beckmesser, while his own heart is aching with longing for the dainty damsel, whom his reason bids him forego—may assist them in their verdict. While they are hunting up the passage we must postpone the remainder of this study till our next issue.

*(To be continued.)*

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## The Death of Gayarre.



In this the sad anniversary of the death of Richard Wagner (Feb. 13th, 1883), we have to fulfil the melancholy duty of recording the loss of one of the most artistic representatives of the heroic characters of his dramas. Señor Gayarre was taken from us in the first week of this year, cut down by the Epidemic which has lately scourged all Europe.

We all must remember how magnificently Gayarre played the rôle of "Lohengrin," how dignified was his bearing, and how spiritual his interpretation of that most subtle of the Meister's creations. Though Jean de Reszke has stepped into his place in England, yet we can but mourn our bereavement in losing one of the too rare great artists of our day, and one who, in Wagnerian drama, was at his best.

## A Vision.



THE yellow fire of the orient moon  
Burned weirdly through a haze of golden smoke,  
Tinting the snowy mount and dewy plain  
And forest dim like softest rainbow light—  
And vast spaces among mighty planets  
Were filled with the unfamiliar brightness  
Of distant stars, till all the rich heaven  
Seemed to uplift and to itself transfuse  
In dazzling warmth the spectral world—lifeless,  
In a calm intensity of living,  
I lay enraptured with Eternity.  
It was a tropic night ; but nothing stirred  
To mar the glory of that deathless dream.  
The green eyes of the tiger glass'd in sleep ;  
The vampire, surfeited, its bloody fangs  
Had loosed ; the mottled Python coiled in rest—  
My soul undid its mortal fastenings  
And passed the limits of the ignorant—  
Their feeble wise and wretched sensual—  
And held converse with the slumberous bee,—  
Saw the throbbing heart of dumb existence,  
The jungled beast, the torpid crocodile,  
The condor in his kingly majesty,  
The serpent in his robe imperial,  
The many-coloured bird and insect rare,  
Fishes and numberless forms of beauty  
Far down upon the sea's translucent floor ;  
Beheld also the gorgeous butterfly,  
In the down of whose immaculate wings  
The weary fairies make their little beds.  
The poem that the oyster writes in pearl

And the seraphic sphinx, I plainly read.  
Though dumb the lark and mute the nightingale,  
I yet could hear the song in their shut throats.  
Came an influxive essence of the Gods,  
And music was no more impalpable,—  
The fluid visions of this fleeting life  
Were firm and vivid as the changeless rock.  
I fled from star to star, but found no home ;  
Strange peoples greeted me—mischievous sprites,  
Whose forms could dance upon a needle's point,  
Spirits, like constellations grouped,  
With thoughts sublime that hold in legal sway  
The noiseless wheels of the dim universe.  
These are the vanguard of Infinity—  
And there no breathing creature could survive ;  
Where food is thought, and air is holy love  
Aglow with an imperishable joy.  
In all the vastness of those shining realms  
I could not pause, but downward swiftly fell  
Into the shadows of the waning night—  
And gone was the witchery of the world !  
My dream, a treasured ghost of memory,  
Else had passed to nothingness—gone was  
The fairy empire of the mystic moon  
And I in solitude was left to wait  
The omniscient eye of purple dawn.

EDWARD E. COTHRAN.

*San Diego, California.*

## "A Pilgrimage to Beethoven."

BY RICHARD WAGNER.

(Translated from the German.)



HIS little tale forms part of a series of sketches which Wagner wrote for Schlesinger's *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* in 1840 and 1841. The collection is, after the manner of Carlyle in his *Sartor Resartus*, prefaced by the following introduction :—

"Shortly after the modest funeral of my friend R——, who died in Paris not long since, I set to work, according to the wish of the departed, and wrote the brief history of his sufferings in this gay metropolis of the world. Among the papers that he left behind him, from which I propose in the sequel to reproduce a few complete articles, I lit upon the record, spun out with loving care, of his journey to Vienna, and his visit to Beethoven. I found therein a wonderful consonance with that which I had already jotted down. It is this which has chiefly led me to give place to this fragment of his journal before my own account of the melancholy end of my friend ; since it depicts an earlier period of his life, and at the same time may serve to rouse some interest in him who has passed away." It may not be out of place here to remind the readers of THE MEISTER that this little story is in its external incidents purely fictitious, as Wagner heard *first* of Beethoven when, as a boy of fourteen years, he was told that he was dead.



Need-and-Care, thou patron-goddess of the German Musician, unless perchance he have become a *Kapellmeister* of some Court theatre. Need-and-Care, to thee, even in this reminiscence from my life, be accorded the first and loudest praise ! Let me sing of thee, thou constant fellow-traveller in my life ! Thou heldest truly by me, and never hast forsaken me ; the smiles of changing luck hast thou with strong hand warned off from

me, ever sheltering me from the oppressive blaze of Fortune's sun-rays! In darksome shadow hast thou ever hidden from me the empty good things of this world; have thanks for thy unwearying attachment! Yet, might it so be, I prithee seek in time, though it be but for a time, some other *protégé*; for, out of sheer curiosity, I would fain once learn how life might fare without thee. At least, I beg thee, plague especially our political crazes, those madmen who wish with all their might to unite our Germany under *one* sceptre; think on't, there then would be but *one* Court-theatre, one solitary Kapellmeister's post! What would become then of my expectations, of my only hopes, which even now hover but dim and shadowy before me—now, when the number of the German Courts is legion? Yet, I perceive, I grow blasphemous! Forgive, my patron-goddess, the presumptuous wish that I have uttered! Thou knowest my heart, and how completely I am thine, and shall remain thy slave, even were there a thousand Court-theatres in Germany! Amen!

Without this my daily prayer I commence nothing, not even the history of my pilgrimage to Beethoven!

In case that this important document should gain publicity after my decease, I further think it needful to say who I am; for without this information, much therein might remain incomprehensible. Know ye therefore, World and Will-executor!

A medium-sized city of Mid-Germany is my father-town. I know not rightly what career may have been intended for me. I only remember that one evening I heard, for the first time, a symphony of Beethoven's performed, that I caught fever from it, fell ill, and, when I gained my health again, had become a musician. It may well have arisen from this circumstance that, when in time I learnt to know other beautiful music, I yet loved Beethoven before all, revered and worshipped him. Henceforth I knew no other pleasure than to sink myself so deeply in his genius that at last I fancied I had become a portion of it, and as this tiniest portion I began to value myself, to come by higher thoughts and purposes—in short, to become that which sensible people commonly call a madman.

But my madness was of very good-humoured sort, and harmed no man. The bread which I ate in this situation was very dry, and the liquor which I drank was very watery ; for giving lessons brings to us but little profit, my honoured World and Will-executor !

Thus lived I for some time in my garret, until one day it occurred to me that the man whose creations I revered above all else was still *alive*. It passed my understanding how it were that I had never thought of that before. I had never realised that Beethoven was present in this world, eating bread and breathing air like one of us ; but this Beethoven lived indeed in Vienna, and was also a poor German musician !

Henceforth my peace was foreby ! All my thoughts grew into one wish : *to see Beethoven*. No Mussulman longed more religiously to make the pilgrimage to the tomb of his Prophet than I to journey to the chamber in which lived Beethoven. But how to set about the fulfilment of my purpose ? It was a long journey to Vienna, and needed money ; yet I, poor devil, hardly earned sufficient to keep body and soul together. I must bethink me of extraordinary means for making the necessary *viaticum*. I took to a publisher a few pianoforte sonatas which I had composed after the model of the master. In a few words the man made it clear to me that I was a madman with my sonatas. He advised me, however, that if I wished in time to earn a couple or so of dollars by my compositions, I must begin to win myself a little *renomée* by galops and pot-pourris. I shuddered at the thought, but my yearning to see Beethoven gained the victory. I composed galops and pot-pourris ; but at this period I durst not, for very shame, cast a glance at Beethoven, for I feared to desecrate him.

To my misfortune, however, I got no pay for these first sacrifices of my innocence, since my publisher declared that I must first make myself a little name. Once more I shuddered, and fell a victim to despair. Yet this despair brought forth some telling galops. I actually touched gold for them, and at last I believed I had collected sufficient money for the prosecution of my purpose. Two years had

now elapsed, while I ever feared that Beethoven might die ere yet I had made myself a name by my galops and pot-pourris. Thank God ! he had survived the brilliance of my name !—Saint Beethoven, forgive me this *renommée*; it was won in order that I might see thee !

Joy ! My goal was reached ! What man on earth was happier than I ? I might tie up my bundle and go forth to Beethoven. A holy awe seized me as I passed out of doors and turned my footsteps toward the south. Gladly would I have deposited myself within a diligence, not because I dreaded the hardships of foot-travelling—(what toil would I not have joyously endured to gain my goal!)—but because I should thus more quickly reach Beethoven. But I had not yet raised my fame as galop-composer to the pitch of carriage expenses. Therefore I bore all my burdens, and thought myself lucky to have been so successful that they could take me to my goal. What enthusiastic dreams I had ! No lover could be more happy when returning, after long years of separation, to the beloved of his youth !—

Thus I travelled to fair Bohemia, the land of harp-players and wayside singers. In one small town I lit upon a band of strolling musicians ; they formed a small orchestra, numbering a double-bass, two violins, two horns, a clarinet, and a flute, and, in addition, there was a woman who played the harp and two who sang divinely. They played dances and sang songs; folk gave them money and they journeyed on elsewhere. In a shady place beside the highway I met them again. They had rested there for their meal. I accosted them, told them that I also was a wandering musician, and we soon became friends. As they played dance-music I asked them, timidly, whether they played my galops also. God bless them ! they did not know my galops. How rejoiced I was thereat !

I asked them if they did not play other music than dances. "Certainly," they answered; "but only for ourselves, and not for gentle-folk." They unpacked their scores, and I found among them the grand *Septuor* of Beethoven; in astonishment I asked them whether they played that also.

"Why not?" replied the eldest. "Joseph has hurt his hand and cannot just now play the part of the second violin, otherwise we would enjoy that pleasure at once."

Beside myself, I seized Joseph's violin, promising to do my best to fill his place, and we began the *Septuor*.

What rapture! Here, beside a Bohemian highway, under the open heaven, to have the *Septuor* of Beethoven performed by dance-musicians, with a purity, a precision, and a depth of feeling such as are seldom met among the most masterly of virtuosi! Great Beethoven, we made to thee a worthy offering!

We were in the midst of the *finale*, when—the road at this spot bending upwards towards the hills—an elegant travelling carriage rolled slowly and silently toward us, and at last came to a halt close beside our resting-place. An astonishingly tall and fair young man lay stretched at full length in the carriage, listening with tolerable attention to our music, while he drew out a pocket-book and made a few notes therein. He then dropped a piece of gold from the carriage, and proceeded on his way, saying a few words of English to his lackey; and thus I saw that he must be an Englishman.

This incident put us out of harmony; luckily we had finished our performance of the *Septuor*. I embraced my friends, and wished to accompany them; but they told me that at this point they must leave the high road, and strike across country, as this time they were about to visit their native village.

If it had not been Beethoven himself that awaited my coming, I would certainly have journeyed with them to their home. Thus we went each our regretful way. It was only later that I remarked that no one had picked up the Englishman's coin.

At the next inn which I entered, to refresh my weary limbs, I found the Englishman sitting at a well-spread board. He stared at me for some good while, and at last addressed me in passable German:—

"Where are your colleagues?" he asked.

"Gone home," I replied.

"Be so good as to take out your violin, and play me something," he continued, "here is money for you!"

This annoyed me; I told him that I did not play for money, and, besides, had no violin, briefly explaining how I came to foregather with the musicians.

"They were good musicians," put in the Englishman, "and the symphony of Beethoven was very fine."

I was struck by this remark, and asked him whether he practised music.

"Yes," he answered, "twice a week I play the flute, on Thursdays I blow the French horn, and on Sundays I compose."

That was a considerable amount, enough to astonish me! In my whole life I had never heard of travelling English musicians; I therefore concluded that they must do very well, if they were able to make their tours in such fine equipages. I asked whether he was a musician by profession.

For a long time I got no answer; at last he informed me, in drawling tones, that he had plenty of money.

I then saw what a mistake I had made, for I had pained him with my question. My embarrassment held me silent, and I devoured my simple meal.

But the Englishman, who had been staring at me again for a considerable time, started afresh:—

"Do you know Beethoven?"

I replied that I had never been to Vienna, and was even now in the act of journeying thither, in order to fulfil the dearest wish of my heart, to see the adored master.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From L——"

"That is not far! I have come from England, also so as to make Beethoven's acquaintance. We are both about to know him; he is a very famous composer!"

What a wonderful coincidence!—I thought to myself. Mighty master, what diverse worshippers thou drawest to thee! My Englishman interested me; but I hereby declare that I envied him

but little for his equipage. It seemed to me that my toilsome pilgrimage on foot was more devout and holy, and that its goal must bless me more than the haughty gentleman who drove there in full state.

The postillion blew his horn, the Englishman drove off, calling out to me that he would see Beethoven before I should.

I had followed him on foot but a few hours, when I unexpectedly met him again. It was on the highroad. A wheel of his carriage was broken ; but in majestic repose he still sat inside, with his valet mounted up behind, despite the fact that the carriage was all aslant. I learnt that they were awaiting the return of the postillion, who had gone on to a village at some little distance, in order to fetch a blacksmith. They had already been delayed a considerable time ; so, as the valet only spoke English, I resolved to go myself to the village and hurry up the postillion and smith. Indeed, I found the former in a tavern, where, deep in his cups, he gave small thought to the Englishman ; however, I soon brought him back to the broken carriage, and with him the smith. The damage was soon repaired ; the Englishman promised to notify Beethoven of my coming, and —— drove on.

Much to my surprise, I overtook him again on the highroad the following day. But this time no wheels were broken ; he was peacefully halting in the middle of the road, reading a book, and appeared quite pleased as he saw me approaching.

"I have waited now some hours for you here," he said, "for on this spot it occurred to me that I was wrong not to invite you to accompany me to Beethoven. Driving is much better than walking. Come into my carriage."

I was yet more astounded. To tell the truth, I hesitated for awhile whether I should not accept his invitation ; but I soon remembered my vow of yesterday, when I had seen the Englishman rolling away : I had sworn under all circumstances to accomplish my pilgrimage on foot. This I told him in so many words. Now it was the Englishman's turn to be astonished ; he could not understand me. He repeated his request, and that he had waited many

hours for me, although he had already been delayed a long time at his sleeping stage for the complete repair of his broken wheel. I stuck to my point ; he went on, wondering.

Candidly, I had a secret antipathy against him, for I seemed to dimly presage that this Englishman would cause me serious annoyance. Besides this, I found that his honouring of Beethoven, and his desire to know him, were more the idle whim of a rich coxcomb than the deep inner craving of an enthusiastic soul. For this reason I preferred to flee his company, so that communion with him might not dishallow my pious longing.

But as though my destiny would fain prepare me for the perilous association with this gentleman into which I was yet to fall, I found him once again on the evening of the same day, stopping before an inn, apparently waiting for me, for he sat with his back to the horses, gazing down the road by which I came.

"Sir," he said, "I have again waited several hours for you. Will you accompany me to Beethoven ?"

This time a mysterious terror mingled with my surprise. This extraordinary persistence in endeavour to serve me, I could only explain on the supposition that the Englishman, noticing my increasing repugnance for his company, wished to couple himself with me for my destruction. With undisguised annoyance I refused his offer again. Then he haughtily cried out :—

"Goddam ! you value Beethoven but little. *I* shall soon see him !" In hot haste he forged ahead.—

This turned out indeed to be the last time that I met this islander on my still long journey to Vienna.

At last I trod Vienna's streets ; my pilgrimage had reached its end. With what feelings did I enter into this Mecca of my faith ! The hardships of my long and wearisome wandering were all forgotten ; I was at my goal, within the walls that encircled Beethoven.

I was too deeply moved to think at once of carrying out my purpose. True, I hastened to enquire for Beethoven's dwelling ; but only in order to choose my lodging in close proximity to him.

Almost facing the house in which the Master dwelt there was a sufficiently modest hostelry. I hired a little room on its fifth floor, and there I prepared myself for the greatest event of my life—a visit to Beethoven.

After I had rested two days, fasted and prayed, but cast no closer glance upon the city itself, I summoned up courage to leave my inn, and went straight across to the house of wonder. I was informed that Beethoven was not at home. This came not amiss to me; for I thus gained time to collect myself afresh. But when four separate times throughout the day the same reply was given me, and, indeed, with a certain increasing emphasis of tone, I considered that this must be an unlucky day, and gave my visit up in dudgeon.

As I was strolling back to the inn, my Englishman greeted me affably enough from one of the windows on the first floor.

"Have you seen Beethoven?" he shouted.

"Not yet, it was not possible to find him in," I answered, surprised at our fresh encounter. On the steps he met me, and forced me, with surprising friendliness, into his room.

"*Mein Herr*," he said. "I have seen you already go five times to-day to Beethoven's house. I have been here many days, and have taken up my lodging in this wretched hotel, in order to be near to Beethoven. Believe me, it is very difficult to get an interview with Beethoven. This gentleman is full of whims. At first I went six times to his house, and was each time sent away. Now I get up early and sit until late in the evening at my window, in order to see when Beethoven goes out. But the gentleman appears *never* to go out."

"Do you believe then that Beethoven is at home to-day too, and can have ordered me to be dismissed?" I cried, astounded.

"Exactly so; you and I have each been dismissed. And, let me tell you, this is very annoying to me, for I did not come here to make Vienna's, but Beethoven's, acquaintance."

This was a very gloomy piece of news for me. Nevertheless, I tried my fortune on the following day; but once more in vain, the doors of heaven were shut for me.

My Englishman, who kept constant watch on my fruitless visits from his window, had now gained certain information that Beethoven did not live in the rooms facing the street. He said that he was very annoying, but unboundedly obstinate. My patience was well nigh exhausted by this news, for I had more reason to lose it than he. One week had gradually slipped by without my reaching my goal, and the revenue from my galops allowed me by no means a long stay in Vienna. Little by little I began to despair.

I imparted my woes to the host of my inn. He smiled, and undertook to tell me the reason of my misfortune, if I would promise not to betray it to the Englishman. Foreboding my unlucky star, I made the necessary vow.

"See here," said the worthy host, "very many English come here to see Herr von Beethoven and to make his acquaintance. But this annoys Herr von Beethoven very much ; and he is in such a rage about the push and curiosity of these gentry, that he makes it quite impossible for any foreigner to get admittance to him. He is a peculiar gentleman, and one must forgive him for this. But this is very good business for my inn ; for it is generally full of English, who are forced, by the difficulty of getting at Herr Beethoven, to remain my guests longer than they otherwise would. However, as you promise me not to frighten off my gentry, I hope to find some means for you to get a meeting with Herr Beethoven."

This was very edifying. So!—I could not attain my aim, because I, poor devil, was taken for an Englishman. Hoho ! my fears were justified, the Englishman was my ruin. For the moment I wished to leave the hotel, for at the house of Beethoven it was certain that every one who lodged here would be deemed an Englishman, and for this reason, I also was barred out. However, my host detained me by promising me that he would find me an opportunity to see Beethoven and speak with him. Meanwhile the Englishman, whom I now loathed from the bottom of my heart, had attempted all kinds of bribery and intrigue, but always to no purpose.

Thus passed away several more fruitless days, during which the purchase-money of my galops visibly diminished, until at last the landlord informed me that I could not miss Beethoven if I went to a certain beer-garden, where he was to be found each day at the same hour. At the same time I had learnt from my councillor unmistakeable details as to the personal appearance of the great Master, which would make it possible for me to recognise him. I breathed fresh life, and determined not to postpone my fortune till the morrow. It was not possible for me to meet Beethoven on his going out, as he always left his house by a back door; thus nothing remained for me but the beer-garden. Alas! I sought the Master both on this and the two following days in vain. Finally, on the fourth, as, at the appointed hour, I again turned my steps toward the fateful garden, to my despair I became aware that the Englishman was cautiously and deliberately following me from afar. The wretch, posted at his eternal window, had not let it escape him that I went out daily, at a set hour, in the same direction. This had struck him, and at once surmising that I had discovered some means of tracking Beethoven, he had determined to seize his share of the profit of my supposed discovery. All this he told me with the greatest coolness, and declared at the same time that he intended to follow me wherever I might go. In vain were all my efforts to circumvent him and make him believe that my only intention was to amuse myself by seeking a common beer-garden, which was far too unfashionable to be worthy of the notice of a gentleman like him. He remained unshaken in his resolve, and I could only curse my destiny. At last I tried incivility, and sought to get rid of him by abuse. But far from allowing himself to be irritated, he contented himself with a placid smile. His fixed idea was *to see Beethoven*, all beside this worried him naught.

And in truth, it was destined that on this day, I should at last, for the first time, see the face of the great Beethoven. Nothing can portray my emotion, and my wrath, too, as, sitting by the side of my gentleman, I saw the Man approach whose looks and bearing completely answered the description which my host had

given me of the exterior of the Master. The long blue overcoat, the tangled, bushy grey hair, and above all the features, the expression of the face, just as, derived from a good portrait, they had long hovered before my mind's eye. Here, then, could be no mistake ; at the first glance I had recognised him ! With quick, short steps he approached and passed us ; amaze and awe chained my every sense.

Not one of my movements was lost on the Englishman ; with greedy curiosity he watched the new-comer, who withdrew into the farthest corner of the garden, little frequented at this early hour, and, after ordering some wine to be brought, remained some time in a meditative attitude. My loud-beating heart told me : It is *He !*

I forgot my neighbour for a moment, and regarded with eager eye and unspeakable emotion the man whose genius ruled, without a rival, all my thoughts and feelings since ever I learnt to think and feel. Involuntarily I began to mutter low to myself, and fell into a sort of monologue, which closed with the but too meaning words, "Beethoven, it is thou then whom I see."

Nothing escaped my dreadful neighbour, who, bending down close to me, had listened with bated breath to my murmurings. I was startled from my deep ecstasy by the words, "Yes ! this gentleman is Beethoven ! Come, let us go and present ourselves at once ! "

Filled with alarm and annoyance, I held the cursed Englishman back by the arm.

"What are you about ?" I cried, "do you wish to compromise us—here in this place—so completely without any regard to what is becoming ?"

At this, he drew a kind of note-book from his pocket, and prepared to go straight across to the man in the blue overcoat. Beside myself, I seized the idiot by his coat-tails, and called sharply to him, "What devil's work are you after ?"

This little scene had attracted the attention of the stranger. He seemed to be painfully aware that he was the object of our

excited attention ; and, quickly emptying his glass, he rose to go away. The Englishman had scarcely noticed this before he tore himself loose from me, with such force that he left one of his coat-tails in my hand, and threw himself across the path of Beethoven. The latter sought to avoid him ; but this good-for-nothing confronted him again, made him a majestic bow, according to the latest English fashion, and addressed him as follows :—

“ I have the honour to present myself to the much renowned and highly estimable Herr Beethoven.”

He did not need to add any more, for at his first words Beethoven, casting a glance at me also, had already turned aside with a hasty movement, and by now had disappeared with lightning quickness from the garden. Nevertheless, the undaunted Briton was on the point of rushing after the fugitive, when I hung on to his remaining coat-tail in a fury of excitement. Somewhat surprised, he halted and shouted in stentorian tones :

“ Goddam ! This gentleman is worthy to be an Englishman ! He is a great man without a doubt, and I shall not delay to make his acquaintance.”

I was petrified with horror. This terrible adventure had destroyed all my hopes of seeing the dearest wish of my heart fulfilled.

I was now convinced that henceforth all my attempts to approach Beethoven in an ordinary way must prove completely fruitless. In the decayed condition of my finances, I had only now to decide whether I should at once set out on my homeward way, with my object unfulfilled, or take one final desperate step to reach my goal. I recoiled before the first alternative, from the bottom of my soul. Who could see the doors of his holiest sanctuary shut for ever in his face, without falling into annihilation ! So, ere giving up the safety of my soul, I resolved to venture upon a forlorn hope. But what step, what way should I take ? For long I could think out no adequate plan. Alas ! all my consciousness was benumbed ; nothing presented itself to my self-racked imagination, but the memory of what I had passed through as I held the

coat-tail of the dreadful Englishman in my hand. Beethoven's side-glance at my unhappy self in this fearful catastrophe had not escaped me ; I felt what this glance had meant. He had taken me for an Englishman !

(*To be concluded.*)

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## Wagner to his Dresden Friends.

*"Richard Wagner's Briefe an Theodor Uhlig, Wilhelm Fischer, Ferdinand Heine."*—Large 8vo, 404 pp., paper covers, M. 7.50; bound, M. 9.—*Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig, 1888.*

### PART I.



INCE the publication of the remarkable Wagner-Liszt correspondence, nothing has appeared in connection with the great poet-composer so worthy of careful study, and so full of deep interest, as this volume of letters addressed by him to the friends of his early manhood.

Though the book was published a year ago, we do not remember to have seen any reference to it in any English paper, and for certain it has been ignored by all those who make it their business to note the important literary events of the day. We can only ascribe this fact to the absence of an English translation, and we would much have wished that Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel could have seen their way to producing or authorising such a help to the Anglo-Saxon student ; but the scant success, financially speaking, of the earlier and more celebrated volume, has discouraged them from any present attempt. In England and America we have not yet fully awoken to the fact that there is much more to be seized and grasped in Wagner than even the grand array of his music-dramas presents ; and few of us have hitherto realised how great a man has passed away from us, at least sufficiently to treasure every record of his life and thoughts. Yet the glimpses of the daily history of the man

afforded by these letters might have an interest even for those who care nought for his music, for no cultured person nowadays, however prejudiced, can deny the fact that in Richard Wagner a new planet was added to the firmament of Art; and, surely, the history and explanation of the very disturbances effected by this new-comer should call forth at least some curiosity.

In us, the members of the great Society that stretches athwart the continent and reaches forth its arms across the ocean, this book should rouse far other feelings. We are banded together to help forward the great work that the greatest artist of the century commenced, and it is our duty to make ourselves acquainted with the mainsprings of his action, with the causes of his sufferings, and with the early history of the rise of a form of art which has fought its way and won the homage of the whole civilised world. Here we have the earnest and sincere portrayal of the inner life of the artist, the record of the first dawn of ideas that have revolutionised operatic music; while on the other hand we are brought face to face with the man in his moments of recreation and friendly intercourse.

If the Wagner-Liszt correspondence was of untold value, as drawing the curtain aside from an almost romantic epistolary companionship of two men whose names are household words, the present volume is no less to be prized, as showing one of these two in his frank comradeship with those who had fought by his side in the ranks. With the exception of two or three letters which we shall notice later, we shall not find, as in the earlier series, the same unfolding of Wagner's deepest thoughts on the mysteries of life and the arcana of religion and art, but in their place we shall see the warm blood coursing through the veins of one who, whatever his detractors may say to the contrary, was beloved of all who came into anything like intimate contact with the man. If ever Wagner aroused the feeling of personal enmity, it was not by reason of a like sentiment on his part, but from the outspoken way in which he denounced whatever of bombast and philistinism he discovered around him. Born without patrimony, and nursed by want, life meant for him a bitter struggle, and if his blows were hard, at least they

were dealt openly and with fairness ; whilst the smallest kindly act and real sympathy extended to him won him as a lifelong friend.

To enter upon our special subject, these letters are addressed to friends whom Wagner left behind in Dresden, when exiled for the share he took in the revolution of May, 1849. They date, with the exception of a few earlier ones, from this period, and, for the most part, cover the next four or five years, a few taking us down as late as 1868. This epoch of Wagner's life was fraught with the greatest consequence for his artistic future, and was that of his greatest literary activity. The letters are, therefore, beyond all value, and should be studied together with those to Liszt, to which they form more than a supplement ; for the volume is larger than either of the two portions of the Wagner-Liszt correspondence, and, the latter containing many letters by the Abbé, these form about an equal bulk of matter written by Wagner's own hand. In this instance we have none of the letters *to*, but only those from, the Meister, though in one or two cases fresh light would have been thrown upon the correspondence, could we have seen the letters received as well as sent ; however, it is only on minor points that such a want could be felt.

The largest section of the present volume, about two-thirds, is occupied by letters to Uhlig, a violinist in the Royal orchestra, and one who took upon himself much of Wagner's business arrangements in connection with the rights of performance of his works. Uhlig seems also to have had some literary talent himself, for we find the Meister referring to various magazine articles by him, and unbosoming to him many of his own ideas for his prose writings. Fischer monopolises two-thirds of the balance of the correspondence. He was director of choruses at the Dresden opera-house, and seems to have been a staunch friend, honest, but occasionally a little gruff. Upon Uhlig's death, Fischer inherited the somewhat arduous post of Wagner's *homme d'affaires* at Dresden. Finally we come to Heine, who, we imagine, must have mislaid a good number of the letters he received, for he is only represented by 50 pages,

though the terms of affection in which Wagner refers to him throughout the volume would almost warrant us in believing that he, an old family friend, was his favourite out of the group of three. In this, and other respects, we can only regret that there is no editorial introduction to enlighten us. This much, however, we know from the evidence of these letters, that Heine was a comedian engaged at the Dresden Court-theatre, and a designer of the costumes for that theatre, and that he brought into finished form the rough sketches that Wagner himself jotted down for the scenery of his earlier works.

Having thus introduced our readers to the quartett, we cannot do better than step aside for a moment, and allow the leader to play his prelude, in which we shall find most of the principal themes set forth. For this purpose we select letter No. 11 to Heine (pp. 379-384), which is the first of those addressed to him by Wagner after his exile from Germany. It may be considered almost as the key-note of the whole volume, and is an excellent instance of the *bonhomie* and elasticity of spirits of this man to whose intimate communion it must ever have been a privilege to be admitted. It runs as follows :—

" MY DEAR OLD FRIEND !

A line at last to thee, of whom I have so often thought at once in joy and suffering. Thou good poor fellow, who gavest thyself such endless trouble to become a right down Philistine, and yet feelst compelled to the most unphilistine resolves ! Could one conceive that a life is so quick outlived ! You dear, good people—thou and thy wife, you two together, what are you living through now, joy or pain ? Both together ! But that is right ; *Life* is the principal thing, and life means to be joyful and sorrowful, to feel, to be moved, to act, to do and strive ; and all this is not thinkable without both joy and pain. How is it with your hearts when you think of your Wilhelm ? Are you bemoaning ? Not so—for Death alone is to be lamented—and when one has a son so full of life as yours, one laughs with him and rejoices over him. Go, and leave the old cottage where it stands ; is it so great a misfortune not to stay pent up in it ?

I live through a whole world-history each time I realise that the *Heinertei* is about to migrate to America, and truly the whole history of the world is at the bottom of it ! Yet how simple and natural such an event seems to us at times. As, at the end of June, I returned to Paris from the country, Wilhelm came to visit me, an hour before my departure for Zürich. I found the healthy, strong young man more to my liking than ever, and was delighted with him. When he bluntly

told me that there was nothing more to be done with Europe, that he was off to America, and father, mother, and brothers and sisters would follow him within two years, I thought it so natural and reasonable, that I calmly took a pinch of snuff and said : 'That's sensible !' Look thou, that was a moment of world-history ! Then all personal, petty, miserable consciousness of man stood still ; and great, naked and open lay at our feet the earth-ball which we call the world, while with one glance we understood the whole carpentry of this globe.—But now too often this world-historical consciousness passes from me, and an unspeakable heartache seizes me at the thought, 'the dear old Heines are going also to America !' Then I clench my fists and gnash my teeth, and often an unearthly curse escapes my lips !—Still, before you go away, let us see one another once more ; we will make a *rendezvous*, and I will keep it !—that I promise you ! !—Enough of this !

My better half has reached me safe and sound. I went as far as Rohrschach, on the Lake of Constance, to meet her. The bird and dog have also come, and we are settling ourselves down in a little apartment. The magnificent Swiss air, the grand fresh Alpine scenery, a few staunch friends, whom I have won here, the feeling of freedom, uncribbed activity, hearty pleasure in my work,—all these things together make me and my good wife gay, and I think that this merry mood may bring forth much that is worthy and good. Should we be in bad humour ? No, even my wife cannot resist the recent proofs of the noble characters of the men we know ; if they be few in number, yet they are of the right sort, and we have learnt to know them at the right time, and thus it is that the worst time is often the rightest. Devil take it ! we shall not starve,—if it comes to the worst, I shall write to my patron, thy Wilhelm in America, and tell him to get me some kind of post, as the last of the German Mohicans,—then you shall pack us up with you and we will all sail off together. If I still hold on with all my roots to Europe, it is because my work has to be done here, and with all my mind's weapons, but I cannot yet bring my heart to agree that a portion of these weapons should be forged in the French tongue, and it is at bottom a mad suggestion that I, of all people, should compose a French opera-book. Everyone who indulges me with his intimate sympathy must understand that. My repugnance is boundless, for it is really nothing but a question of gaining fame ; and at whose hands this fame ? Great God, only of good-for-nothings, not of honest, sensible folk !—Well, we shall see !

At the moment, I look upon it as a duty to satisfy an inner necessity, which impels me to speak out once for all clearly and definitely upon the subject of the whole practice of Art. There is already in the press in Paris and Leipzig a short treatise of mine : 'Art and Revolution.'—Presently a second essay will follow this : 'The Art Work of the Future,' which will finally be concluded by a third : 'The Art Workers of the Future.' When thou makest their acquaintance, dear friend, thou wilt understand, I hope, that, not from outside influence, but from deepest inner need I have evolved to what I am, and now proclaim the views which I hold. It seems to be thy fancy that all that which has failed to please thee in myself, and that, owing to the tendencies of the age in general and to my nature in particular, thou hast not been able to explain at once, must be set down to the evil influence of another. The premisses of my creed, as thou hast known them from my works

and from my views, thou hast admitted to be right, but hast drawn back in terror from the logically necessary conclusions from these premisses. In this thou hast been wrong, just as our whole so-called cultured world is wrong, when it will not allow B, after it has admitted A. But this B demands also courage and conviction set firm as a rock ; and these two have nowhere a sure seat,—hence we may explain the present sorry outcome of great inceptions. Thou thinkest that my conviction will part me from my artistic production ? Quite the opposite. Since I have seen clearly that our whole public art is no Art, but only art-journeymanship,—that it, with all the foundations on which it is built, must go unpitied to the devil,—only since then have I at last found true joy in art-work, in that art-work which shall spring of itself, by natural laws, from the Future, and at which, for my own part, recognising its conditionments, I now can and will toil with liking and with love. This process, dear friend, comes not about by eating of oysters and delicacies in comfortable sofa-corners ; but on the broadest market-place of life must one first sharpen his teeth by biting stones, ere the eye become as clear as the inner nature of this eye permit. For this reason, brother Fischer, to whom I now write through thee, inasmuch as I pray thee in my name to greet him with a fervent brother-kiss—for he has given me the great joy of at last, and of his own accord, proffering me his brothership,—brother Fischer whom, as he is now my brother, and this is permitted among brethren, I ought properly to call an old fool to have refused brothership before on no other ground than because our ‘position’ (!!) did not allow it,—brother Fischer, then, will shake his head violently and suspiciously, when he hears of these my latest views on Art. Yet, do thou assure him, the dear, good, honest brother Fischer, that these latest views are throughout the old ones, only that they are clearer, less hap-hazard, and therefore more humanised. He can’t help being glad when he sees once more something of my thoughts, how clear, precise, comprehensible and reasonable the whole thing must look,—for my public of the Future cannot be composed of the clever and would-be-clever *ennuyés* of our privileged art-world of the day, but of all sound, uncrippled men, who have a valiant heart in their body, as brother Fischer himself has—(forgive me, I don’t, of course, refer to thee, with my ‘uncrippled’ ; I hope thou wilt credit me with sufficient delicacy of feeling not to have wished to play upon thy one-toned chime of bells).\*

Look now, good little Heinemann, we have fallen upon our old ways, as though nothing had happened, and it seems to me as though we were our same old incorrigible selves ! So must it be, and so remain ! If the new comes forth from me, yet, at the bottom, it is ever the old, only made younger and beautified ; but if the new comes from outside to disturb us, so we thrust it on one side, as well as we can, and if nothing else is possible, at least we reach our hands to one another across the ocean, even if thou must needs stand a wee bit on tiptoe. When thou goest to America, who knows but that I may meet thee from Kamtschatka, through which country I may have got myself smuggled from Siberia, as soon as the Russians have opened up the route. Thou must then welcome me, and not, as an American Republican, disown me, because forsooth I come to thee in the ragged uniform of the Saxon court !

But meanwhile, so long as we yet remain so near to one another in Europe, we

\* It would seem that Heine was lame at this time.

must hear one another reasonably often, if it be only by letter ; so, send me a right good letter, and tell brother Fischer that he must also write me, a hotch-potch of everything that occurs to him, just as though we were chumming together as of old in the evening over our herring-pickle. That is the right thing, and has right homely scent.

One thing more ; greet Krieten for me, and give him a good hand-grip ; dost thou hear ? He belongs to those who in these parlous times have taught me more and more to love mankind.

Greet also X. ; I understand and value him, although he may think his love of me a fault—and thy good wife, and Marie—greet them from me and my good wife, to the best of all thy might ; for I mean it all and heartily. And now farewell, keep a good heart ; thou hast good reason to, for many are worse off than thee, and they have no Wilhelm, to whom I prithee commend my most obedient service. Fare thee well, and hold me dear,

THY RICHARD.

Zürich, September, 1849."

With this translation we must close this portion of our review, leaving more minute analysis and classification until our next issue.

(*To be continued.*)

#### NOTES.

THE Annual Conversazione of the London Branch of the Wagner Society took place on the 3rd of last December, at the galleries of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colors. In the previous year the Prince's Hall had been the *locale* selected ; but it was found that the restriction to one room for both music and conversation was a serious obstacle in the way of the social element of the gathering. The Committee therefore determined this winter to follow the example of the "Salon," and engage the suite of rooms upstairs. As at that time an exhibition of pictures by the members of the Oil-Color Society was in progress, the change from the dead white walls of the lower hall met with universal approbation.

The musical programme was treated

in two sections, allowing opportunity before, between, and after, for social intercourse and conversation. Mr. William Shakespeare (a member of the Branch), Herr Max Heinrich, Señor Albeniz, and Miss Fillunger, were the artists. Mr. Shakespeare sang "Un aura amorosa," from Mozart's *Così fan tutti*, "Lehn deine Wang," and "Murmelndes Lüftchen," by Jensen, with a song of Brahms as encore piece. Nothing could be more artistic than the way in which this gentleman phrased the music, accompanying himself in a manner which, for our part, we prefer to that of Henschel. He sang in that sympathetic fashion fitted to an assemblage of friends, and one felt that this was the refinement of chamber-music.

Herr Max Heinrich's contributions

were "Wahn! Wahn," and "Pogner's Anrede," from *Die Meistersinger*, with the "Abendstern," from *Tannhäuser*, for encore. His rendering of the last-named was magnificent; we have rarely heard this most romantic of Wagner's earlier airs sung with such deep appreciation of its beauties, an effect largely assisted by Herr Heinrich accompanying himself in this particular instance.

Señor Albeniz played with great delicacy and refinement of expression Liszt's "Predication aux oiseaux," "Rhapsodie," and "Walderauschen." His other selections were "Walhall," "Feuerzauber," and "Walkürenritt," arranged by Brassin, from Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*. We cannot say, however, that we like these arrangements; there is too great an effort shown in them to reproduce the orchestral effects, and the "Walkürenritt" especially should never be attempted on the pianoforte, except for the sake of private personal reminiscence.

Miss Fillunger sang two songs by Brahms, "Es Schauen die Blumen," and "Wehe so willst du mich wieder," and the closing scene from *Tristan*, "Isolde's Liebestod."

A large number of members and guests attended the Conversazione, which appears to have been a complete success, and reflects the greatest honour upon the management of Mr. J. Cyriax. We regret to say that this gentleman has within the last month resigned his post as Honorary Secretary. For four years past he has acted in that capacity conjointly with Mr. Chas. Dowdeswell, and the members of the Society, especially those who have been brought into more intimate connection with him, by reason of Committee duties, must one and all be sorry that we are now deprived of his energy and ability. Mr. Cyriax, however, finds that his health and multitudinous business engagements prevent him from continuing in work whose magnitude was only known to a few of us. As he threatens us with excommunication, if we say one word in his praise, we can only add that

luckily he still will remain on the committee. Mr. Avigdor L. Birnstagl, of 5, Pembroke Gardens, Kensington, W., will replace Mr. J. Cyriax as Hon. Treasurer, a post which Mr. Cyriax has also vacated. Mr. Chas. Dowdeswell, of Brantwood, Macaulay Road, Clapham Common, S.W., will be sole Hon. Secretary; and Mr. W. H. Edwards, of 66, St. Mark's Road, North Kensington, W., has been appointed Acting Secretary, to whom all enquiries respecting the Society should henceforth be addressed.

On January 23rd, a symphony by an old friend of Richard Wagner, and a valued member of the London branch, Mr. Ferdinand Praeger, was performed at Mr. Henschel's Symphony Concert. The four sections of this work are fused into one; but as the whole piece only takes about twenty minutes in performance, the need of pauses is not experienced. Mr. Praeger met with a most enthusiastic reception, and was heartily applauded for a work which is full of depth.

We have no space to notice the many performances of the Music-dramas that have lately been given abroad. Suffice it to say that Dresden is just passing through a complete greater cycle of these works, and that New York also is representing the whole series. In the latter city Vogl and Reichmann have become great favourites.

The *Bayreuther Taschen-Kalender* for 1890 (which may be obtained of the secretary of the branch, price 2s.), contains some excellent articles by Wolzogen and others, and a list of the performances of Wagner's dramas in German-speaking cities, from which we see that 967 representations were given, an increase of 50 per cent. over those of the previous year.

We are asked to state that the next concert of the students of Trinity College, London, will take place at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, on Monday, March 31st, at 8 p.m.